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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAN

Editorial Commentary

-- "Nuclear Iran"

Daily columnist Rakan Majali writes on the back-page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (04/13): "Iran's announcement of becoming nuclear was not a surprise, and this has in fact cut off the path of any threats or provocations. Like North Korea, Iran explicitly defied America's arrogance of controlling the fate of the world in a manner that reflects moodiness and aggressiveness. Since the United States has swallowed North Korea's rejection of U.S. threats, it will in turn swallow Iran's defiance, despite the presence of the Israeli whip that will continually try to mobilize America against Iran going nuclear.. More importantly, America will make a thousand calculations before it deals a destructive military blow to Iran.. This Iranian step has put America in an embarrassing situation. While it invaded Iraq on the basis of doubts, fabrications and lies that were later acknowledged as such, America turned a blind eye to semi-confirmed reports about Iran's progress to develop nuclear weapons. The question today is whether America will deal with Iran the way it did with Pakistan and India, that is accepting the reality, or it will deal with this development in accordance with Israel's calculations which do not mind getting America involved in a type of mad adventure. Iran's joining the nuclear club might be an opportunity for America to reconsider its calculations in the region in a manner that serves its interests and help remove the tension and instability in the region for the benefit of all."

-- "Iran and the 'good news'"

Daily columnist Oraib Rantawi writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (04/13): "Iran bid farewell, probably forever, to the club of the weak and the weaklings and officially declared its joining the club of nuclear powers.. Congratulations to Iran on its achievement and its accomplishment in these very difficult regional and international circumstances. Congratulations to its leaders who were looked upon by some 'modernizing' leaders with a great deal of belittling. Let all our

hopeless initiatives of making the Middle East a WMD-free area go to hell; these initiatives that convinced no one.. As for us, we will continue exercising our favorite hobby: panting after a mirage of lost projects and empty slogans."

-- "Tehran and the nuclear club"

Daily columnist Basem Sakijha writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (04/13): "It is not ordinary news what Iran announced. The fact that Iran is now a member of the nuclear club means that many of the formulas and equations could change. The Islamic Republic is reaffirming the fact that it cannot be ignored and that it must be addressed as an effective regional power. There are many losers and winners. Washington and Tel Aviv are the first losers, as there appears in the horizon a new and different formula where Israel does not seem to be the sole controller.. There are other losers like the Arab regimes who were not able to win neither war nor peace. But there are major winners like Damascus which has reaffirmed its continued presence through its strategic relationship with Iran.. Many things will change in the Middle East. We believe that the Arab street is viewing this development with a sense of reassurance. After all, the Islamic nuclear bomb gives the Arab people back some hope and optimism while they watch Israel eating away at everything."

-- "Iran is nuclear"

Chief Editor Ayman Safadi writes on the back-page of centrist, independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad (04/13): "America will now have to think a million times before undertaking a military adventure in Iran. It will escalate its diplomatic efforts and exercise economic pressures, but it will not open a battle front with Iraq. Yet, the danger of getting the region involved in a new military confrontation is now coming from Israel, which considers Iran's joining the nuclear club a strategic threat with which it cannot live. Israel's calculations in this regard are very different from Washington's. Israel knows that if it starts a military confrontation with Iran, it will not have to finish it alone. Therefore, it is not unlikely that Israel would direct selective strikes to Iran's nuclear sites, removing what it considered the biggest threat to it and leaving the responsibility of preventing any Iranian counter-attacks to the America.. As for the Arabs, they stand completely helpless and without any influence on ongoing events. As usual, their role will be that of the spectator, despite the fact that Iran's development of the nuclear bomb constitutes a blatant threat to their own interests."

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